



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LADJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGH
TRANSCRIBER: LAURA SERAFIN

NARRATOR: MOZZAFAR FIROUZ

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mozaffar Firouz

Date: December 6, 1981

Place: Paris, France

Interviewer: Habib Ladjevardi

Tape No.: 1

Interview Language: English

Q. If we could begin by talking, asking you to give us your reflections on the evacuation of Russian troops from Iran and your own role in this important event.

A. Well, you know the question of the evacuation of Russian troops from Iran after the Second World War is a question which, unfortunately, is not very well known by our younger generations because the history of this period has been deliberately -- I repeat -- deliberately falsified in order to fool the people of Iran and to present history under some other color. When Qavam-os-Saltaneh ... after several Iranian governments had come and gone and the Soviets had refused to evacuate, pretending that Iran was a fascist center and was considered a danger... Finally, at that time I had a newspaper in Iran, and ... a daily newspaper....

I think perhaps it was for the first time in Iran -- there was sort of a referendum organized by a newspaper. I sent about 25,000 small papers asking questions from people in the ministries, from people who had ... who could read and write anyway, and who understood the situation, asking them: "Under the present situation, who, in your opinion, should come over and take over the reins of government, and try to solve this very vital question which threatens our independence and our national integrity?"

Anyway, I sent all these documents and distributed them. Finally, we had about, if I remember correctly, something like 18,000 replies at that time. And I think, roughly speaking, the majority was in the name of Qavam, Qavam-e-Saltaneh, with my own uncle, Dr. Mossadegh, second with about 400 to 500 votes less than Qavam. Of course, Qavam-e-Saltaneh was an old man who, at that time, had a great deal of experience. He had been several times prime minister. And obviously, perhaps for this reason, at that time in Iranian history, the majority of people -- of intellectuals anyway -- preferred a man with more government experience, who at the same time was a patriot, and he had proved it so during his tenure of office.

The name of Qavam came, so we ... in our paper we ... claimed the result of the referendum. And there was about a month

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and a half or two months left for parliament to....

Q. Adjourn.

A. At that time the parliament gave what the Iranians call temayol, which of course means their sentiments as to who should be invited to form a government. The Shah, at that time, had not arrived at a position where he nominated who he wanted to. But ... and as the parliament was discussing the question, there was a tremendous amount of intrigues going on to prevent Qavam being elected.

Anyway, the basis of those intrigues at that time, from what we understood, came from the British Embassy, which did not want, in reality, the Russians to leave. Why? Because British policy was based on the old imperialist conception of a division into two spheres of influence -- as they had done in the 1907 agreement with the Tsarist government, and they hoped they would be able to renew the same procedures after the Second World War. In reality, the plan for Iran was what happened in Vietnam and Korea. The north of Iran, the south of Iran, the North Korea, the South Korea, the North Vietnam, the South Vietnam, all north and south -- the north being under the protection and influence of one bloc and the south under the protection and influence of the other bloc.

At that time, American diplomacy in Iran was really playing a

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very second role following the British line, because they had very little experience. It was just after the Second World War -- a year after, a few years after. It was the beginning of their experience. And, we must say, rather unfortunate experience -- as time has proved since the Second World War -- in their diplomatic relations in all parts of the world, from the very Far East of Chiang Kai-Shek, starting from there to where now we have come to the other countries of the Far East, like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos. Everywhere they had one objective, and everywhere the contrary to that objective arrived, as events have proved. So, unfortunately, the ... time has shown that nobody seems to appreciate in America that at least one should learn from one's own experience. What is wrong? There must be something wrong -- that this situation is such.

Well, anyway, in ... about two years before the revolution, I wrote a long memorandum to President Carter. And I explained <that> I believed in Carter's personal integrity. I think he meant well. I considered him weak. I considered him to be under the influence of Brzezinski, who was his counselor, who was more Polish than American, and wanted at all costs -- even at the cost of another second ... third world war -- to try to bring about an independent Poland. Whatever happens.

I wrote a long memorandum for Carter, explaining to him the situation in Iran. A very critical memorandum. And told

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him, explained to him, that the policy they are pursuing ... they're preparing the ground for a very big revolution, which will be inevitable in Iran if they do not change policies, if they do not do away with the system they have of thinking ... under world conditions today. A country such as Iran could be directed with people who are completely pawns in their own hands without any personality, without any nationality, simply obeying -- as the Shah did. That was my conception, which I wrote to Carter.

And as a matter of fact, I said to him, "I imagine that you" I proposed to him two things which he did immediately. I must express my gratification -- which I did by letter to him afterwards. I asked him to do two things. To clear his mind. I said, "Send about 10 or 15 people, of your personal friends, the people who have not been responsible in forming policy in Iran during the last 10, 15 years, but who know the situation of the world. Will you send them there? Tell them to see the dossiers, to see people, to talk, and come back to you to give an objective report of the situation in Iran."

Secondly, I asked Carter to ... I said that I cannot -- I can not -- accuse my own compatriots, Iranians, unfortunately, of being corrupt and of the pillaging their country. But, I said, "You know, relations which existed between Nixon, Kissinger, Helms -- especially -- and the Shah were not the normal relations existing between a chief of

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state and other chiefs of state in other countries. And I think American interests dictate that a special commission should be formed to investigate how, what these relations were. And, perhaps, some good will come out. We shall clear up certain mysteries. And I think there are many Iranian patriots who would be prepared to present, send people who will witness in such a commission, and help. It's on this basis only of good relations that the future is possible between the people of Iran and the people of the United States."

Well, as far as the reports I had, he sent an aeroplane with about 10 or 15 people to Iran about 10 days afterwards. Without Sullivan even being informed. And I heard (I don't know whether it is true) that Sullivan was surprised. Who were these people who arrived suddenly without his information? And he took a plane and went to Washington to see what it's all about. But I think instructions were being given to the CIA to give ... present these people with all the dossiers they needed. And they could meet people they considered useful that they should meet to get an idea of what was going on in Iran. And that's what happened. They stayed, I think, about 10 or 15 days and they gave a long report.

Q. What type of people were these?

A. They were personal friends of him. They were personal friends of Carter, yes. I have not got the names but I know there were between 10 or 12. That was what surprised, apparently....

I sent a copy of my letter to Ambassador Young, whom.... I had never met him. I don't know anything about him. But by his action I saw he understood more of what was happening in the Third World than any of the other diplomats who were in.... He was ambassador to the United Nations. And I knew he was a friend of Carter. In fact I imagined that probably the election of Carter was due to him who helped getting the Black vote in America for Carter at that time. I do know that ... he wrote me a very nice letter. And I do know that Carter ... that he <Young> had been impressed by this document I sent. Because he <Young> wrote me a very warm letter.

But he <Young> started giving interviews, talking about Khomeini being a saint and this sort of thing, you know. And they asked, "What are you talking about? You are an ambassador to the United Nations. This is not your affair." At this point, he had been impressed, I think, and he showed the danger for the United States if the same conditions continued in Iran.

Anyway, the Helms' dossier -- I said to him <Carter>, I said,

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"Helms -- he already has a dossier for perjury. I request you to send this dossier to ... until the question of his presence in Iran <unclear> can come under consideration." And he sent that immediately. And Helms was convicted for two years -- prison. Of course prison without -- what do they say, what is the exact term, I don't know in English, I forget -- ta'lighi, which is, if he commits another crime and is convicted, well, the two years will be added, you see. He was convicted for two years of prison. And the judge, in convicting him, said that, "You are the symbol of shame for America." That was all in the press -- in the documents. It was all <unclear>. All right.

Well ... and I remember that in the documents, which I wrote to Carter, I said to him, I said, "A government must be well-informed. Well, you have what you call the Central Intelligence Agency." I said, "You know, Mr. President, I imagine if historians went one day to write the history of this period of the world in which we are living, they'd find it difficult to write the 'Central Intelligence Agency'. They might be tempted to write 'the Communist Inspired Agency'. Because of the results -- the people judge by results -- the results of the policies, is the results of information given by what you call the CIA. Since the Second World War up to this date, everywhere has shown that you've got the opposite results to what you expected."

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"And now," I said, "You are doing exactly the same thing in Iran, preparing the ground for revolution. And the only possible solution of such a revolution," I said, "if you want to stop this, is to finish with the present regime as soon as you can. And to proclaim that the independence of Iran, the national sovereignty of the Iranian people, is a vital American interest. That's the only interest on which real American interest can be preserved in Iran and in the world which we live in today. The question of domination is part of an epoch which is finished. The sooner this is realized the better." That was really the conception of what I wrote to Carter at that time.

And, well, events proved that what I wrote to him two years before ... exactly that happened as far as Iran was concerned. So, unfortunately, we are now in front of... I've said this, which is not part of your question about Azerbaijan, but I think it was necessary to say that.

To go back to the Azerbaijan question and the evacuation of the Russian troops. Even at that time, the British were against the election of Qavam. It was with great difficulty, and certain manipulations with deputies, this, that and the other -- which only Qavam himself knows, and perhaps I know, I'm in the secret at that time -- that we managed, in spite of all the intrigues, for Qavam to get the majority in the parliament by two votes. So the Shah was obliged to call for

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Gavam.

It was at that moment that Gavam-os-Saltaneh asked me whether I'd like to collaborate with him. I said it would be an honor for me, but that I had certain conditions which I thought were necessary for accepting responsibilities and participating. He said, "What are those conditions?" I said, "We must show that we are in Iran. We -- and you -- are in favor of profound social reforms. And what has been completely neglected during all these years and that ... the basis of that is that a Ministry of Labor, with a minimum salary for Iranian workers, should be put into operation by us in spite of the crisis, in spite of all the situation, to show that we mean business. As soon as possible." He said, "All right, fine." And he asked me to become vice prime minister, and at the same time to form the new ministry, Ministry of Labor and Propaganda. Which I accepted.

Well, before we formed the government, he asked me, he said, "I want to ask you a particular service." He said, "I want you, in person, to discuss with the Soviets the conditions of their retreating from Iran, and evacuating the soil of Iran from all their troops and these arms which they have actually in place, and which ... under our agreement made during the war, they should have left when the Americans and English, left under the same agreement." I said, "All right." But, he said, "this must be completely secret. Nobody should

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know, not even in the Council of Ministers. The question must not be discussed. And, when everything is finished, then we will present the case, but not before, and nobody should be in the secret." I said, "All right."

He said, "The only thing I ask you is to ... if possible ... to leave, send a card for the Russian representative here." I said, "I'm afraid I can't." "Oh," he said, "You're always awkward like this. You're like this. But we're under their bayonets, their occupying ... their troops." "But" I said "it's a better reason to be able to preserve our dignity. We have nothing but dignity to preserve. We have no independence. We are under foreign occupation. At least we are sure that we are capable of preserving our dignity. I have no objection. But under the protocol it's he who should come and leave a card for me. It's he who has affairs with me. It's he who is accredited to our government. When he gives the card, with great pleasure I will of course return with my card."

So he saw that it was useless and so he sent one of the ... a person who he knew was closely perhaps connected with those people, asking them to send a card for me -- which they immediately did. It was part of their protocol. But he <Gave> wanted to be particularly nice ... to say "the person wants to discuss <unclear> ..." <but> for reasons of protocol and dignity I didn't accept.

And they left their card and I returned the card. And that was where the ... relations started between me and the Russian representative there at that time, who started discussions with me. Well, we had discussions. I always met them and had long talks -- secret talks. <unclear> And the talks continued. After about 10 or 15 days, our representative ... because the Iranian question was the first question which was before the Security Council of the United Nations, which had, of course after the war been newly formed in New York. And our representative there was <Hossein> Ala, an old Anglophile and a courtesan, as you might call him, an old courtier, but which provoked an incident.

I was talking in Tehran, directly expressing our friendship with the Soviet Union: "We have 2,500 kilometers of frontiers, which condemns us -- and you -- to live on mutually good relations, friendly relations. But these mutual relations must be based on the respect, mutual respect, for our dignity, our security and our independence. And for this reason, we want you to retire your troops because it is very difficult for this government to accept, to continue if we remain under foreign occupation." At this moment when I was talking on this basis of friendship and so on, which was the reality of the situation, and my own personal political beliefs: we must have the good relations and the ... keep the balance between the two great powers.

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They exist in order to preserve our independence.

Well, at this moment, suddenly there was a violent incident in New York. Ah ... I don't know ... in a rather offensive and critical way spoke against the Soviet Union's representative, who was Gromyko, as a matter of fact, at that time. And he got up from the table, clacked on the table with his fist, went out and clacked the door.

Q. This was Gromyko?

A. Gromyko. This incident.... Suddenly this news came when I was talking with the Soviet representative on this basis.

Q. Did Ah do this on his own, or did he have instructions?

A. It was the Shah's hand and the British intrigue.... He had no.... I'll show you a copy of a telegram. It's interesting for you. Anyway, of course it mad a fool of us. We were talking in this way with the Russian representative. The fellow came.... I was furious. The fellow came to see me. And he said, "What is this game? Is it a game you're playing with us?" I said, "No." I said, "You are perfectly justified. You are perfectly right. He's our representative. But he had no instructions from us to even open his mouth, because we are talking with you here. And I will see what can be done."

Of course, I was in favor of immediately kicking him <Ala> out, you see. Because the question was of vital interest for Iran. I talked to Qavam, I said, "Look here. We must...." Qavam was rather indecisive ... but a little conservative, and he said, "Well, it's difficult now to kick him out exactly because he's done it without...." But he said, "Prepare...." I said, "Well, we'll send ... a very, very strong telegram." He said, "All right. Prepare it. Write it, show it to me and I'll see ... small things I'll make and we will send a strong telegram." I said, "All right."

I prepared the telegram, and I showed it to Qavam, and he changed it a little bit -- made it a little milder than what I'd.... But it was still very, very strong. Anybody with any respect for his own honor would himself have resigned at that moment, you see.

Well, a telegram was sent. And I gave instructions on the radio. Officially it was said that this incident was absolutely without any instructions from the government. Ala has made these ... certain statements and he has been called to order ... for this reason, you see. I have the text of the telegram which Qavam in his own handwriting ... he copied and he made certain things. And I have that telegram, which is very interesting. It's a historical document -- moment. Well, the Russians of course got to know, with what was said

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on the radios and so on, that we were not playing a double game with them. But still, of course, the negotiations dragged on.

Till finally, after another 10 or 15 days, I finally summoned the Soviet representative to come and see me. And I said to him, I said, "Look here, you know, we are talking for weeks. I've shown the best of my good will -- good will of the Iranian people towards you. I have not seen the same reciprocity. And I've asked you to come tonight ~~at~~ it was ten o'clock that I asked him to come> "to send a telegram of what I want to tell you tonight, direct to Generalissimo Stalin." When I mentioned the word Stalin, he jumped from his seat because he was surprised. But he said, "No, Molotov is...." I said, "Yes, but what I'm going to say is very grave, and I would prefer it would go direct to Stalin."

Anyway, he said, "All right, what is it?" I said, "Well, look here, we've shown our goodwill, we can't do more. We've not got the means to act in a military way against a great power like you. And we don't want to insult our interest and we can't do it. ~~unclear~~ Everything a government which respects itself ... can do. If it's not possible for it to carry out what it hoped to be able to carry out -- with very good will towards your great country -- then it will resign. And that's what we have decided to do. That's the reason why I wanted you to telegram to General Stalin that if, within a

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very short time Russian troops still remain in Tehran, in Iran, and the north of Iran, well, the government will have to resign. But, as I told you, our policy is based on friendship towards you. And is respecting the same principle which I have told you during our conversations, that I want to tell you now, that when we resign we have to give a proclamation to the people. Or they will wonder why we resigned. Well, I must tell you, as a respect ... with the respect and the friendship we have talked to you about, and which is sincere, to prove the sincerity of this friendship, we shall be obliged to explain the reason. And that reason will be that our experience shows that the Soviet policy today no longer respects the Leninist conception of the respect for independence and the national sovereignty of other peoples.

So on this basis, we are obliged to resign. We can do nothing else. By conscience we cannot continue to keep the country in this state."

He took notes and he went. Well, two nights afterwards, he telephoned me: "Can I see you?" I said, "Of course." And -- it was about the same time -- he came, and he said, "Telegram from Generalissimo Stalin." And he sat down -- very quietly, very tranquilly. I was very pleased. He said, "Well, we have received a telegram. I'm instructed to come and tell you that after 25 days <something like that, roughly 25 days> there will not be one Soviet soldier with arms in Iran."

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Q. This was before Qavam's trip to Moscow?

A. No, he'd gone and come back. It was about a month and a half afterwards.

Q. I see.

A. Oh, yes. Moscow had done nothing at all, you see, about the.... No, no. It was ... a month and a half, two months afterwards, this affair. After all these negotiations, the Aia incident, and all that, you see.

Q. I see. So this is in April 1946, just before the proclamation, the Qavam-Sadchikov proclamation?

A. Yes, yes, exactly. Anyway, ... the proclamation, when it came ... and we had news, of course, we had news. And it's here which I went to express the gratitude, which really represents the gratitude of the Iranian people, towards Trygve Lie, who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations, who was sending messages for us. He was doing his best there to arrange this conflict. And, of course, he could see, who.... He saw Aia. And he sent messages. And he said to us, "I am sending messages and I hope these messages are getting through" -- through an ambassador, a foreign ambassador, who arrived, as a matter of fact, in

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Tehran. He said, "Tell Qavam that I'm sending messages through Ala. I hope they're all received." Well, we had no messages from Ala.... We had no messages from Ala.

So, finally, when he <Trygve Lie> resigned and went and wrote a book, In The Service of Peace, which I've quoted in my book, he talks about Ala. He said, "I had told this man I am sending messages, which were secret, to send to his government. I don't know whether he sent them or not, but what I do know is that the same day that I spoke to him secretly, afterward he was in the Department of State telling them exactly what I had been talking about." That was the concrete result of this man's, the first Secretary General of the United Nations ... who was really sincere in trying to find a pacific solution to this, you see.

And, anyway, when the Russians came and they gave this ... I asked them would they confirm it by writing the next day. But I didn't wait because we had information that the British at that time had brought troops to Basra. And they were waiting; they wanted to come in with troops, saying, "The Russians are there, so we've come in." It would have been de facto, automatically the division of Iran. Because if the British came, they <the Russians> wouldn't have gone. Nobody would say anything. They would have just stayed there, that's all. As the French say, 'Je suis <unclear>' "Nobody would leave. They are all there." Exactly the same thing as in

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Korea, as in Vietnam -- this sort of thing happened, with the same policy and the same plan at that time.

Well, that was as far as the thing.... They left. I must say that the Russians, after the 25th, 26th day, the final limit of their thing, there was ... scrupulously observed their commitment. And it was the only country which they left by their own will. They stayed ... after the war they stayed in Austria for 14 years, before they arranged a treaty there -- of neutrality and so on -- before they withdrew all their troops.

Q. What was the role of the so-called Truman ultimatum?

A. It was a lot of talk. The Russians didn't care a damn about the Truman ultimatum. It had absolutely no importance. But Truman ... it wasn't an ultimatum, you see. <He> was speaking: "Why don't they leave?" It was just to keep some of the Americans, as I told you at the beginning of this talk, in reality, the U.S. again was absolutely ... to follow the British line. And the British line was -- and we have further reasons and further proofs of that -- is that they were preparing -- they had their troops in Basra. They wanted to come in, as I told you. And they had started to make intrigues in the south of Iran, where ... with the Bakhtiari tribes -- the Bakhtiari and the Ghazghale, but particularly the Bakhtiaris -- they wanted to proclaim in Esfahan an

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independence, just like Azerbaijan, you see, in the south.

It was the same game. So, when the Russians came, I didn't wait for their ... I saw it was a question of hours. It would have been in fact the division of Iran, you see. I gave instructions that the radio should ... and the news should be distributed everywhere that the Russians have come, and they've ... and they are leaving. The affair is settled and so on. It would have been received the next morning, anyway. But before we received it, the news had been given out that the affair had been settled. And they scrupulously observed and respected their obligation.

That was as far as the withdrawal of the Russian troops. But the Azerbaijan affair and the question of the southern rising against the government, to prepare them there also ... was also of great interest at that time because.... With my own personal idea -- and Qavam approved it -- I nominated, with Qavam's approval, for the Bakhtiari tribe, two Bakhtiari people, you see. One was the son of Morteza-Gholi Khan, who was the ... (I can't think of his name now) the older son of Morteza-Gholi Khan, and another Bakhtiari, who was Abolghasem Khan.

I sent for them. And they came. Jahanshah -- Jahanshah was the son of Morteza-Gholi Khan. And Abolghasem. And I talked to them. I said, "Look here, I want the Bakhtiari to

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nominata two of you Bakhtiari as governor of the Bakhtiari tribe." It was the first time something happened like that in Iran. I said, "Up to now, you've always been running around foreigners, thinking you preserve your dignity, your good ... this that and the other. But whatever you want, you must want from your own government. Why ask foreigners?" They were very pleased. Jahanshah said, "Of course." I said, "You will have your relations there, all right. You have ... the British consul is in Esfahan. You can have the ordinary and normal relations, if there's any question of anything you ... normal relations. But ... you have nothing to run after him about. Concerning Bakhtiari affairs, you're representing now the government. I'm giving you dignity." When I said that, Jahanshah said, "But, oh, you know, if I get hold of this man, I'll cut his neck." I said, "We don't want that either."

Q. Which man?

A. The consul, the British consul.

Q. Trott?

A. Not Trott. No. He was in Ahwaz at that time.

Q. Gault?

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A. Gault, Gault, yes. Gault -- he was in Esfahan at that time, yes. I said, "We don't want that either. No question of cutting throats. I am asking you to respect your dignity, your country's dignity, when you're carrying out a duty which falls part of the government. That's why I'm giving you this. We want to encourage you to change your ways, the Bakhtiaris."

Anyway, they went. And from the very first week, the meetings started between them. And I even have letters of Gault, written in Persian -- he spoke Persian -- <unclear> which he sent to these people, "We have to have a meeting," he wrote, this, that and the other. That sort of documentary evidence.

Q. To the Bakhtiaris?

A. The Bakhtiaris, yes. And the Rashidian people at that time, as well.

Q. Asadoliah Rashidian?

A. Asadoliah. Asadoliah and Seifollah. But the father was, the old ... the old fox there was the father, you see, who had based the whole relations, and so on. And it's very amusing about the father. And the investigations... Anyway ... when this was going on we got the reports. Abolghasem

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sent us regularly all reports. He was in there and he was sincere towards me. We got all the reports -- exactly what's happening. Any documents he could find, he would send, and he was himself in the meetings. And Qavam said, "This is your affair, you must go to Esfahan."

Q. This is in September 1946?

A. '46. You know all the dates better than even me.

Q. Well, I've worked on these....

A. Anyway, I had formed, as you know, with Qavam, the Iranian Democratic Party, at that time, with a progressive program of reform which was to be, in my opinion, a solid party -- a national party of reform, you see. To ... not to give, leave the space ... any opening to other people -- to put their foot in it. We have a party, we want to make reforms. And, as a pretext, to open the section of the Iranian Democratic Party in Esfahan, I said to Qavam, "All right, I will go to Esfahan to see what can be done.

Anyway, I had ... there was a colonel in the gendarmerie who had my confidence. I wrote out a special order, in an envelope, sealed it, and gave it to him. I said, "You go to Esfahan. When I come, when my plane arrives, you come to the aerodrome. You'll open this document after my arrival in the

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aerodrome. And you'll carry out the instructions in it. You see. You have no right to open it before." "All right." He went.

Well, we went.... The Iranian Democratic Party representatives were there, all the dignitaries were there. The general, the head of the army there, the ... was there also. General Mo'tazedi, who had very good relations with my family. His father everybody would know very well. I informed him, "I'm coming to see ... I'll come in to your house."

I didn't want to go to the governor's house. The governor was an old Anglophile who I knew very well. But when I was very ... at six or seven years old, I went to England -- I was at Harrow and Cambridge, you know. And he was there. Nice fellow, as a matter of fact. But he was governor. Nader Arasteh. He was an old Anglophile; I knew that. I wanted to ... I knew there would be probably some troubles and so on, so I wanted to go ... to the general's.

They were all there, of course, at the aerodrome, when I arrived, including Jahanshah, who I saw there with about 20 or 30 Bakhtiari horsemen, you know, a couple of hundred yards the other way -- waiting. They had come, I think, with Jahanshah to the aerodrome. They all got down. I said.... Everybody very nice, and so on. Jahanshah -- everybody came

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along, and we got down, and Mo'tazedi was there, General Mo'tazedi, and I was accompanied by all these people to the car, which I wanted to get into and go to Mo'tazedi's house. And ... well ... the colonel, who'd got there ... he was there of course. And he ... by a sign, he said he knew ... he had opened and knew what it was about. So when I was saying goodbye to everybody, I said to Jahanshah, "Well you have perhaps a little discussion with the colonel," and so on, and so on. "I'll see everybody later," and so on. I got into Mo'tazedi's car and went.

And when I left, the gendarmerie colonel put Jahanshah in the jeep and took him to prison -- immediately. And it remained his father, Morteza-Gholi Khan. Now Morteza-Gholi Khan was so connected -- all those years, of course, with the British and so on -- that even Reza Khan didn't dare touch him. During all the period of "Reza Khan the Great" as they called him in Iran, he didn't dare touch Morteza-Gholi Khan. Well, they gave me two guides, and I sent a few gendarmes up 2,500 meters into the mountains, and they arrested him at midnight and they brought him to Esfahan -- Morteza-Gholi Khan.

And I immediately proclaimed military government in Esfahan. And I proclaimed General Mo'tazedi as the military governor. I had to do that -- anything could happen, you see. Everything had been prepared. We had to act immediately. Of course, in my absence, intrigues were going on in Tehran, and

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some one or two of the ministers in the cabinet.... When I gave this proclamation that "we order the proclamation of the military rule in -- martial law -- in Esfahan. And I proclaimed General Mo'tazedi as the governor-general. Anyway, it was proclaimed, it was executed immediately, and everything calmed down.

At midnight they brought him there. And I wanted to send him to Tehran. He sent me a message, not to send him by plane because of his heart and so on ... to send him by car, if possible -- to Tehran. I said, "All right, well, tell him we'll send him Thursday." You see -- three days later. I gave instructions that he be sent the next morning. Because I thought if we wait until Thursday they might send some Bakhtiaris on the road or something. Anyway, they took him to Tehran.

And the interesting part of all this is that the whole conception of course fell through. But the next morning I was working in the office at the military governor's house. They came and said that Fedakar wants to see me. Fedakar was a deputy of Esfahan -- a Tudeh deputy. And ... I was working, so I said, "What does he want?" They said he had something really urgent and he wanted to see me. So I said, "All right. Tell him to come in." And he came in, and he said, "What is all this business about the martial law about, anyway?" I said, "Who the hell are you talking to? This

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doesn't concern you. What you are talking about?" He said, "Well, we can't support this." I said, "Well, get out." I said, "Either get out immediately and shut your mouth, or you follow the others who I've sent to prison. Get out," I said. And he went. I've never heard any more about him. Another incident happened about Fadakar....

Q. There were some rumors that he had been storing arms or something in Esfahan, sort of a rebellion. Is that true?

A. Well, but, you know, many of the Tudeh people ... it was quite normal. Because when a <unclear> party which begins a progressive program, always the contrary party tries to infiltrate to find out what's happening. My uncle, Dr. Mossadegh, was so convinced about this, that in the Tudeh party there were many sincere ideological people -- I knew them -- who believed ideologically that everybody has his opinion -- which should be respected. But there were also lots of humbugs in there, you see, who were there on missions. And that's what I always told the Tudeh people in Tehran. I told them, I said, "Do you think you're talking ... in your committee, central committee, you talk there and so on and so on ... and nobody knows what's going on?"

I said, "But you have British agents there amongst you." "Oh, who? Tell us the names." And so on. I said, "I can't tell you the names. But there are British agents amongst

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you. But I can give you a receipt, a diagnostic, with which you will find out who they are." I said, "Whoever, when you get together in your committee, speaks against me is a British agent. Now go and find out yourself who it is. I don't know."

Q. Well, do you think they were actually preparing an armed uprising?

A. Well, if there were British agents.... I don't know, you see, because the Tudeh people, no.

Q. Did you find any arms?

A. No, I'll tell you exactly what happened, as a matter of fact. After this happened, and I kicked him out there, I stayed again and went back to Tehran, of course.

In Tehran, there was quite a scene in the Council of Ministers. The Tudeh were in there. And they said, "But why has this been done without a decree of the Council of Ministers?" You see. He wanted to.... Qavam, everybody ... was sitting. And I said to the Tudeh people, I said, "When I have a responsibility, my belief and conviction is that nothing else but the national interest of the country counts. If it gets ... at such a moment ... for some bureaucratic reason, some act of vital importance should be delayed, I

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will not wait for that bureaucratic preparation, because I know that can be prepared immediately, and I know that everybody, and the person, the government that I represent, is favorable. That's the reply to your question." Gavam said, "What he's done, he's done on my behalf." Because I signed: "on behalf of the prime minister: Firouz." You see. This incident, also <unclear>.... And that was the, how the....

Q. Because Fadaker's son, Iraj, has said that at that time his father and a group had stored some arms at the Nour factory, that they had thrown them in the river when you came, before you came, or after you came, something like that. I wanted to know if this was true.

A. No. That ... you know, I'll tell you something. Amongst the Tudeh people, there were some who really believed in the ideology. And amongst them also those who ... with a certain amount of nationalist leanings as well, in spite of their ideology, which is international. But there were others. And for me, all those who were, as we say, more Catholic than the Pope, you see, on certain questions, were agents who had infiltrated. However, that was my own experience. Those were very, very, sort of more Catholic than the Pope and trying to push along those things which they knew would probably provoke incidents and difficulties and so on, well, it was done on the basis of a program. The whole trouble was

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that; that it was an organization which had been well organized, and they had clean people in it -- ideologically clean people -- and they believed what they did.

And my own opinion, was, well, Iran should be a democracy. We have 2,500 kilometers of frontier with the Soviet Union. It's a communist country. If we want to have coexistence with those people, we can't pretend to be a democracy and to sort of shut the mouths of a very small minority of people who want to express their beliefs, these beliefs. On the contrary, if we want to shut the mouths, it will make them more influential, you see. And, the best way is to get them in, get them to come, and everyone should know exactly who stands for what. It's as simple as that. And I think that was the best policy that was pursued at that time. At that moment, you know, the entry of communist ministers in a Middle Eastern government was almost unthinkable.

Q. How was that decided -- to bring these people in?

A. Well, when Qavam ... when we discussed with Qavam this question about the reforms and this sort of thing, that trouble should not be made from the part of the Tudeh people, Qavam said, "In my opinion, if we bring a couple of these people in, and give them a sense of responsibility, they can't do anything. They're there. That will open their hands, anyway. If it's empty people will see. If it's full,

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then people will see what's in them. People will see. We must be psychological in this. In shutting mouths, and being brutal, and this and that, it's not policy, especially when we want to live on relations of mutual respect and independence with...."

Q. Was there any Russian pressure to bring these people into the cabinet?

A. No, they didn't even know. One of the Russian people came....

Q. Because I think Dr. <Fereidoun> Keshavarz has said that....

A. Keshavarz is one of those I'm talking about -- these agents -- he's one of those, who was amongst those agents. Do you understand what I mean? But, I'll tell you. It's my own personal opinion ... was that, because Keshavarz ... we brought him in and he came in. All right. But, even <Dr.> Radmanesh in later years, he was ... to me he said, "Why didn't you bring me along in?" He was clean. He was clean, clean, clean. <Dr.> Radmanesh was one of those clean people, you know. He believed in.... "I don't know," I said, "I don't know. I wanted two or three of the Tudeh people in there and didn't really mind who it was, and you are, perhaps, justified in what you say. I should perhaps have

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brought you in because you had more experience than the others, and I knew certainly that you were at least clean -- you understand what I mean -- as far as your beliefs go."

Anybody who is clean in his beliefs and is not hypocrite or playing double jeu, as we call it, or "the double game" -- all right. And if the destiny of the world has to be the other way, all right, the destiny is that, but the only way to preserve national independence will be to have these 2,500 kilometers. I always said to Qavam, I said, "Look here, if the Russians bring two corps d'armee to the frontier, and not give it military orders, but just tell them to start urinating, what's going to happen in Iran? There's going to be ... inundations everywhere in Iran." I said, "We must exactly see where we stand, what we can do, and do that under the best possible auspices, in the preservation of our own independence."

And I got the justification of this in Azerbaijan. Why? Because -- and nobody knows this, you see, very few people know it, of course. Of course there were people who were present there -- they knew. In Azerbaijan, when I'd been there two or three days speaking with these people, suddenly ... Pishevari started talking about ... he wanted Zanjan, as far as ..., in Azerbaijan. I said, "What the hell are you talking about? What are you talking about?" I said, "This is the document we've prepared. It's this or nothing. Sign

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here or nothing." You see. All right.

I got very angry and I got up. I took with me General Hedayat -- of Tabriz -- I took Moghaddam with me, who I had nominated as governor-general, military governor, of Azarbajian before I left Tabriz. I gave him the order. And a number of people with me, in my suite. And they were all sitting there, you see. I got up, I said to Pishevari, "I can't say ... I refuse to listen to this nonsense any longer. Do you want me to give instructions immediately here and now to have you arrested?" I had nothing. What did we have on him? He suddenly lost his color -- Pishevari. I got up and said, "Go to hell, all of you."

I went back to the place where it had been prepared for me. I telephoned to <the> Russian consul to come and see me immediately. He came. He spoke Persian almost as well as you and I.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LADJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGH
TRANSCRIBER: LAURA SERAFIN

NARRATOR: MOZZAFAR FIROUZ

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RESTRICTIONS: NONE

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Interviewer: Habib Ladjevardi

Tape No.: 2

Interview Language: English

He spoke Persian almost ... very well. And I said, "I have business in Tehran, unfortunately, which forces me to go back much sooner than I expected. My own plane is coming here in two days, but at present I have no plane and I've understood that there's an Intourist plane in the aerodrome. Would you please give instructions that they lease it to me immediately. I am leaving for Tehran at three o'clock this afternoon." He said, "What, what, will you leave for Tehran?" I said, "Yes." "But why?" I said, "What are these people you've brought in this country, and do you think we're going to listen to all this nonsense? Who the hell do they think they're talking about? And to whom are they talking?" I said, "I will show what should be done. I'll show them what should be done when I get back. Please, I want from you -- I want a plane."

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"Oh no, no, no," he said, "they must sign what you order. They must sign what you said, that the agreement was that, wasn't it?" I said, "I don't know. I've given the signature. I'm not waiting for anything. I want a plane. I don't want any signature. I want a plane." He left.

After half an hour, Pishevari telephoned me. "But there must be some misunderstanding somewhere. There must be some misunderstanding. We have done nothing ... that should upset you or to be against what you say. Will you permit us to come around immediately to see what it's all about?" Well, they were back within half an hour. And the papers were all signed. This incident....

Q. This is in June '46?

A. Yes, in 1946. But this incident occurred in Tabriz, you see, in Tabriz -- when I decided to leave immediately. And when we signed, I said to Pishevari, I said, "The radio of Tabriz from eight o'clock tonight must be put in my disposition. And tell them every hour that they speak, they say I have something important at eight o'clock." They said, "All right." At eight o'clock I went on the radio Tabriz. (Excuse me, I'll put this here for a moment. Yes. This was the....) The next day, after it had been signed, I gave a luncheon for them. This was the luncheon the next day, you

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see, I'm speaking to them.

Q. Mr. Firouz has shown me a booklet which is entitled <Persian> "Iran on the Road Toward Democratic Reform Under the Leadership of His Excellency Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh," printed in June 1946 by the Propaganda Organization of Iran.

A. This was all the reforms, all the decrees, which we did at that time, you see. It's the High Council of Elections, everything....

Q. And your speech is in there?

A. This speech concerning Azerbaijan, yes, is there. Which I'll show you because it's interesting -- from Tabriz....

(Translation of speech read in Persian)

Countrymen! Tonight, from the city of Tabriz, i.e., the cradle of Iran and the center of the great liberation movements, I speak to you, dear countrymen. As you know, the negligence and bad policies of past governments, the repeated treason of the imposed representatives of the Majlis, ignoring the execution of the constitutional laws, and violating the basic rights of the people, had induced a group of oppressed and high-minded

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offspring of Iran to rise up for the defense of freedom, and consequently brought about the recent developments in Azerbaijan. No need to mention that the actions of reactionary elements nearly transformed the pure soil of Iran into a battleground for civil war and bloodshed, more than ever plunging this country and its oppressed inhabitants into misfortune and misery.

In the very crucial moments during which, because of the negligence and lack of interest of government officials, desperation and hopelessness had prevailed throughout the country, public opinion shifted towards the old and able statesman of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh. And a consequence of that public opinion was that, despite the intrigues of reactionary elements, the reins of state of Iran have been placed in the experienced hands of this patriotic man.

Immediately upon Qavam-os-Saltaneh's assuming the premiership, the apprehensions concerning civil war and fratricide disappeared, and gradually anxiety has been replaced by hope.

And repeated victories in foreign and domestic policies, as well as international prestige, have made Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh's name famous throughout

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the world. And this aged man has been recognized as a symbol of Iran and of honor in domestic as well as foreign opinion. As a result of these developments, repeated victories, and reforms, Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh became the leader of all freedom-seeking Iranians.

After a majority of the internal and external problems had been resolved, the only one which remained was the problem of Azerbaijan. Following negotiations with the representatives of Azerbaijan in Tehran, the head of state (the prime minister) dispatched me, together with a committee, to Azerbaijan to continue negotiations with those representatives, under his grand instructions, until the problems between us are resolved and settled in the interests of freedom and national unity.

Dear audiences, you well know that the problem of Azerbaijan was, for various reactionary elements, a means of constantly intriguing and poisoning public opinion in order to engender fear and anxiety. Unfortunately, these reactionary and treacherous elements were not content with internal poisoning, and intended to internationalize the problem of Azerbaijan in order to invite foreigners to

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interfere in our internal affairs, despite the principle of the sovereignty of Iran.

The astute policy and strong will of the head of state, as well as the good intentions and patriotism of the representatives of Azerbaijan, in particular Mr. Pishevari (we had to admire him there), by solving this problem in the interests of freedom and national unity, turned into despair the last hope of the reactionary elements who were determined to exploit and distort the issue of Azerbaijan in order to invite foreigners to interfere and deal a blow to the independence of Iran. At this moment, one should not ignore the fact that those who had favored fratricide, and who until yesterday had been, through reactionary propaganda, pointing to the use of force as the sole means of solving the problem of Azerbaijan, have today been disgraced before public opinion and the nation of Iran. And it has been proved with certainty that good intentions and adopting good policies are the best means of solving problems and removing difficulties.

As the contents of the agreement indicate, the principle of autonomy and national government in Azerbaijan has been transformed into provincial and

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city councils, the appointment of a governor-general for the provinces, and determining directors for the government offices there. His Excellency Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh's prudent and compromising policies, which produced such outstanding results, have been totally approved by the nation of Iran.

Finally, as the result of repeated negotiations during these recent days, an agreement has been signed and exchanged with the representatives of Azarbaijan at half past 7 o'clock tonight. And this important problem has been, with the utmost sincerity and honesty, solved in the interests of Iran and her national unity. The nation of Iran has always been proud of her magnanimous and daring Azarbaijani individuals, and tonight from Tabriz, i.e. the seat of freedom-loving Iranians, I inform you, dear countrymen, of this grand and important news.

Now, in the aftermath of the solution to this problem, one should know that tomorrow there will be no reason for disunity among freedom-loving Iranians, and the reactionary elements must also know that the government of His Excellency Mr. Qavam-os-Saltaneh, relying on the glorious and

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united force of freedom-loving Iranians, will, with the utmost power and despite all reactionary intrigues, take outstanding steps towards securing the welfare and well-being of the people and will initiate reforms throughout the country. By our broadcast of this happy news tonight, all freedom-loving Iranians will certainly celebrate and honor His Excellency, Mr. Gavam-o-Saltaneh, who has been astutely and successfully, despite various difficulties and continuous provocations from the reactionaries, sailing the ship of the country towards reform and prosperity.

In the midst of the joy brought about by this grand victory, I must bring this point to the attention of well-wishers and freedom-lovers of the country: that by forming unity and alliance among the columns of all freedom-lovers, the grand and united soldiers of freedom, we shall block any kind of infiltration and influence of the reaction so that, under this unity and alliance and the leadership of the head of state, we may succeed in serving the country and securing the well-being and tranquility of the people in order to avoid embarrassment before history, contemporary and future generations, God, and the masses.

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Finally, I, for all my countrymen, announce that Azerbaijan, despite the poisonous propaganda of ill-wishing elements, has been and always will be an inseparable part of Iran, and no one is able to separate the honorable and patriotic offspring of Azerbaijan from the motherland.

Long live Iran. Long live all freedom-lovers.

Q. What was the date of this speech?

A. At 9:45 pm on 23 Khordad 1325.

(End of translation.)

Q. So what happened? Why didn't this agreement become implemented so that there would be no need for bloodshed? What went wrong?

A. It was implemented.

Q. But why was there finally bloodshed and civil war?

A. Because the Shah started intrigues. That was after I went to Moscow. I was never.... I nominated the governor-general. I nominated the ... all the heads of departments, and the military governor, the military

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commander, everything ... exactly under the 1906 Constitution
-- <Persian> the town and provincial councils.

Q. But do you think, on the other side, Pishevari had good will and good intentions to implement this?

A. The question is here. The question of Azarbaijan is the incident I told you with the consul. You see, it was no longer a question of Pishevari, but a question of international relations. Obviously, Pishevari would prefer to be the prime minister sitting there. Do you understand what I mean? But, the proof was when I wanted to leave, and the Soviet consul came, and said, "Oh, no," that this was the agreement made, that they should sign, and so on. And they came. It shows that it was the international aspects of these things, that if you have a good policy, there can be no difficulty with the people who profess this ideology. There must be good international policy. Do you understand what I mean? There must be good international policy that everybody....

It was after these events that they accused me of being Communist. All right. If to get the Russian troops out of Iran -- all the negotiations were done by me, in person -- if to arrange the question of Azarbaijan, bringing it back into the nationalist camp, if that is Communist, all right, I'm Communist. I'd be honored to be a Communist.

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Q. Do you believe that this plan, that the administration of this plan, was practical, and that if the policies that you and Qavam-qa-Saltaneh pursued were continued, then there would have been no need for...?

A. Well, if the policy which I proposed, I had always wanted, if at that time, at that moment, we could have ... one of the reasons a republic was proclaimed in Iran ... had simply kicked out the Shah at that time, the whole course of history would have been changed. Do you understand what I mean?

Q. When was the question of republic discussed? I didn't follow you.

A. No. See, if we had done that. If we had done. We had the possibility to do anything. We could run everything we wanted, you see. There was no question.... But I didn't want to, for my point of view, push Qavam too far, because Qavam would go up to a certain limit. Do you understand what I mean? To a certain limit. He put the Shah in his place. He brought me, without even consulting, without even talking. The Shah didn't know. <unclear> And I told the Shah, I said, "As long as I am in the government, you will reign and you will not rule." I said, "This is a fundamental conception we have of the constitution and the government of

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Iran."

Q. I think you weren't one of his favorites.

A. I beg your pardon?

Q. I don't think you were one of the Shah's favorites.

A. No. But I think he made a great mistake, because, you know, I had nothing, but of course I didn't back him. I didn't back his family. I was against his father. I was against everybody -- the whole family. They were usurpers. They usurped this place. They'd been brought by foreign bayonets. But when ... in front of a de facto situation, national considerations, in my opinion, should be above personal friendship or enmity or personal considerations, you see. And this was a person who had no personality. He could only be a valet. And a valet who wanted to be free to rob, himself, with a certain, as the French say, "association de malfaiteurs" -- a certain number of people around him. And the rest to send all the wealth of the country out, in the purchase of armaments ... nobody can even understand what ... they're so sophisticated, how to manipulate. Do you understand what I mean?

I mean, think of what schools, what universities, what reforms, agricultural reforms, what could have been done with

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all this wealth in Iran, if it had been done for the people. And it's the only way to keep these countries like Iran, these people, from slipping away into the other camp. And that's what we cannot, we cannot explain, don't understand how, nobody can arrive to explain to the Americans.

Q. What were the circumstances for the end of that coalition cabinet and the departure of yourself from the cabinet in October 1946?

A. Well, at first I didn't accept to go to Moscow. I wanted to continue with the Democratic Party -- organization.

Q. Why was the cabinet disbanded?

A. Well, it was the pressure, the pressure from everywhere, almost, you know, from the English, from the Americans, from even certain Tudeh people. All these people. Everywhere. Nobody was in favor of one hundred percent nationalist policies, my belief was -- and today it's more than ever justified.

Q. Well, the Americans have written that they were afraid that the cabinet was coming under the control of the Tudeh, and the three Tudeh cabinet ministers were packing their ministries with Tudeh partisans, and therefore that's why they were against this coalition cabinet.

A. No. The reason was ... the Americans, as I said, they were always badly informed. The policy which Qavam was pursuing, we were pursuing, that's the policy everybody knows. It was in my hands, I was doing all the discussions, all the policies with all these people. And the Russians, in spite of the fact that I was on their blacklist; in spite of the fact that in my newspaper, three days out of every six days that it was printed, the leading article was an attack on the Tudeh, signed Firouz. These are the documents. You've seen it. All right.

In spite of all that, you see, I got into the Qavam cabinet, all right. And we brought about what you see -- the reforms we made, the.... In a very short time we succeeded where others failed. We arranged the question of Azerbaijan when the others couldn't have done. The Russians would not have gone. They would have stayed 14, 15 -- perhaps they'd even have gone further south. But on several occasions, I know, even when I was appointed ... afterwards I went to Moscow.

Even when I was there, they ... on several occasions, the proposal of a division of Iran into two spheres of influence has been proposed to the Russians. And quite recently again, about two years ago, they proposed, you see. Every time the Russians have said no. For the simple reason that it's obviously difficult for a communist government to come and

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sign, as the Tzarist government did, at the same time, a document, a protectorate over a country, of spheres of influence and so on, and pretending to be socialist, communist and respecting the independence and integrity of.... It's hardly possible to conceive that. But if they even wanted it, under those conditions, it wouldn't be possible for them, you see, to....

For instance the question of Azerbaijan. They'd retire their troops, but the Azerbaijan people were there. To not let the Azerbaijan affair be settled, that would have been sufficient for the proclamation of a southern independence, you see. It was with the arrangement of the question of Azerbaijan that they followed this line which I pursued, you see, and they saw, and that's where there I spoke -- and I spoke very strongly with them.

Q. The Russians?

A. They respect people who don't hide the truth from them. They have a big respect, and they do respect people they see defending ... and especially when they saw that this person, who George Allen pretended was a Communist, and sent a report to the State Department saying he was a Communist, on the Shah's ... counsel. Because he was against me, you know.

Q. The Shah had told George Allen that you were a communist?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. You know, there's a controversy regarding this coalition cabinet -- the end of this cabinet. There's one group that says that Gavam thought that the usefulness of the Tudeh members in the cabinet was over and therefore voluntarily disbanded this cabinet. There's another view saying that the Shah had finally succeeded in persuading George Allen to back him up and support him, and, by using threats, force Gavam-os-Saltaneh to disband his coalition cabinet, to discharge six of its members and bring in new members who were more favorable to the Shah. Which of these two theories do you think *(is)* closer to the truth?

A. Well, I think there was a bit ... a certain amount of truth in the fact that the intrigues were made against the government, which even went to the extent of telegrams that who should not be in the government, you see.

Q. Telegrams from?

A. The Ghashghaii and these people. They sent ... from <?> on American instructions. That's quite true. I knew that. And, Gavam-os-Saltaneh wanted to ... he wanted to sort of keep everybody, you know. He wanted to keep a sort of a balance of everybody. And, unfortunately, when he.... One

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day he went to see the Shah and he said, "I've seen ... just been to the Shah and I've resigned," he said.

Q. Was that a surprise to you?

A. He hadn't told me before. He said, "I've resigned. I've resigned." I said, "You've resigned?" "Yes." He put -- like a child, you know -- he put his hand in his pocket. He said, "But I've got another order: to form the new cabinet." Laughing. He said, "I wanted to ask you something." I said, "All right." He said, "What have you done to these Americans?"

I said, "Me? To the Americans? Nothing at all. Why, I've only put into application your policies! I have done nothing against the Americans. On the contrary, what we have done, that's what the government has done, you have done that through me, by me, on my initiatives.... It was the acting, in my opinion ... the matter is not only in our national interest, but it's also in the interest of the Americans to have Azerbaijan free, to have the Russians no longer in the country. Perhaps they wanted them to stay. The British did want them to stay ... did want them to stay. But the Americans were ... sort of ... it appeared to us anyway, Truman pretended that they wanted them to go. But, otherwise I've got nothing against the Americans. What have I done? I've done what was my duty to my country. If the Americans

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want a member of the government to carry out their caprices, do what they say, I would never like ... accept to become a member of such a government. We are not here working for foreign interests. We must keep and show that we are capable and have sufficient dignity to keep our own independence. Nobody's going to grant us independence. We have to take this independence. We have to achieve it. In keeping ... our situation is such that we have to keep the very good relations with the two powers. And that's where our objective is. If the Americans want domination, well that book is finished." I told that, at that epoch, to Qavam. "If they want legitimate interests, friendship, well of course, nothing better."

Q. So then how did he tell you who is going out of the cabinet and...?

A. Well, then he said, "I want to ask you something.... I want to ask you to invite George Alien, have a dinner with him, invite him to dinner, a personal dinner. Because I don't know what you've done to these people. Of course you've done what I've said, but they have their fill, you see." I said, "Well, they can be full or empty. I haven't.... We've put through a policy which has been successful. If Iranian success in preserving its national independence runs counter to their interests, you see, then I'm sorry. I can be of no further use. Otherwise, I don't

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see <unclear> with them. But why do you want me to invite him for dinner?" He said, "Well, if you invite him to dinner and be nice with him. Talk to him. You know how to talk to these people." And so on.

I said, "Well, I always talk in a nice, friendly way. And, anyway, but I don't know what they've got against me. In other words, you are asking me to invite George Allen to a friendly dinner so that should be a visa for me to be in the government? I would never do that. That I can never do. 'We'd like very much, Your Royal.... We like you very much and we extremely....' Don't ask me. That's something I can't do. You see. Because not only it's <unclear>, it's contrary to their own interests. One day they may wake up. but then it will be too late, you see." I said to Qavam.

He said, "Well, look here, would you go to...? What will you do then?" I said, "Well, I'll continue to organize the Democratic Party." He said, "Oh, that's also difficult to do. We want the Party to be ... perhaps organize only the party and the party in hand, you see." Well, any government that came would have pushed the Party to put into application the policies of the Party. He said "Well, that's also difficult, now it makes difficult work for me," and so on. He was rather....

He said, "Well, look here. For three months, four months, go

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on a foreign mission as ambassador, if you like, to Moscow, somewhere. After four months I promise you to call you back. We'll have to have elections. If you want to be elected, you'll be a candidate, and have you elected." And so on. I said, "No, I don't want to go to... ." He said, "Well, think about it, and tomorrow you'll come and we'll talk over it again."

I went home, and the next day I again saw Qavam, and Qavam showed me a list. He said, "These are the people I want to bring into the cabinet." There were some extraordinary names in it, you know, and so on. I said, "Who the hell are these people?" I said, "Do you know you have a party?" He said, "Yes," I said, "Well, where are the members of this party? There must be some?" Finally, I made a condition with him. I said, "Look here, I'll accept." He said, "For three or four months you go there." "If I can be of service to your policy in any way, there, I'll do it. But, I have one condition. Some of these members of the government must not be in." He said, "Who?"

Well, I proposed three ministries. There was the Ministry of Labor ... was one, and the Ministry of Communications, and the Ministry of Justice. As minister of justice I proposed a man called Mousavizadeh. He was a judge.

When Reza Khan left and the Shah was reigning, because he had

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assassinated my father, as you know, I pursued the police. The Shah was reigning. The Shah said to me, "Oh, look here, do this, anything you want." He tried to buy me: "Do this." I said, "Look here, this is not a question of ... it's a question of conscience, it's not ... there's no price which is possible to pay. It doesn't exist. It's Iranian history. Your father can be bad and you can be good. You can be good, your son can be bad." I said, "If you tell him in my behalf, tell the Shah that if he wants to be a good Shah, he can't be a good son." That's exactly what I said in the message to him, you see. "I'm sorry," I said, "I can't do it. My advice ... if you want to be a good son and continue in the same line, well, you can't end you won't remain Shah."

And I continued. It was the biggest -- you weren't there. Perhaps you've ... of course you've heard about it, if you've heard about the history of Iran. There was the biggest list of accusations against all these people. We had them all arrested. And in the big salons of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was the court, because there was no place where 500 people, <unclear> everything.... For a month, nearly a month, every day in this court I was there. And it was the whole history of Reza Khan: how he came, all his crimes, the politics that brought him. Ali. I opened the whole door for everybody. People came in. They were shouting, they were cheering and so on, you see. And Mousavizadeh -- I'd never met this man -- was the judge,

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presiding judge. I'd never seen him in my life.

And I know the Shah was spending lots of money. He'd brought for Mokhtari this ... good attorneys. Dr. Aghayen was there ... to defend him, and so on. And he was trying to buy the judges, you see. All right. I was aware of that. The only implement I had was to carry out a press campaign, you see. Which I did. My newspaper ... I hadn't yet started Raid-e Emrouz at that time; I was writing in the Setareh and other newspapers at that time, but organizing many newspapers. And a big press campaign to show the judge that he can't ... must be careful. He must keep the road straight, you know. That everybody was watching. Anyway, the whole show ended, and he gave a judgment, condemning all these people. And one of the things which the ... of giving him a sort of extenuating circumstances, you see, which made his imprisonment less, was that it had been done on the orders of what was to become the "Reza Shah the Great," you see. And this is an official document which went to <the> highest ... the Court of Cassation. Highest court.

Q. This Mousevizadeh had been the judge?

A. Had been the judge. That always impressed me. After that I became very friendly with him and I wanted to pay him back -- the duty he had done towards his country, the honesty he had shown, and the.... He'd been a very good judge to the

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Ministry of Justice, you see. I made him minister of justice. Qavam accepted. I told him the reason. I said <unclear>. He did that in order that I accept....

Q. To go to Moscow?

A. To go to Moscow, yes. But when I was there, they started little intrigues in Azerbaijan. When I was ambassador. And....

Q. Did Qavam want to do this?

A. I beg your pardon?

Q. Did Qavam want these intrigues to take place?

A. When.... After I went, it was "malgré" Qavam -- in spite of him -- because he was then surrounded by people, all kinds of things the Shah had got more. He'd got more into ... other people's hands. When I was there, I didn't allow.

Q. How could this 25, 26 year old Shah overcome a statesman like Qavam? That's what I can't understand.

A. Well, he didn't overcome a statesman like Qavam. Qavam knew him....

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Q. He forced him to....

A. Qavam knew him very well. Sometimes ... sometime we're talking, they'd say, "When will you get rid of this shit? If you can do it, do it quickly." Several times he was talking plainly, I mean. His impression he knew. But he was an old politician, you see. And he was always seeing on the foreign policy questions how, where the possibilities....

Q. It seems that after your departure the game was lost. I mean, according to history, because from then on....

A. No. For Qavam it was lost. He told me himself. He told me himself. When he came here....

Q. Why did he allow this?

A. Because, well, he had to. Qavam was doing the whole damn work for him....

Q. What if he had refused to disband his cabinet?

A. If he had done that, it would be much better.

Q. Why didn't he do it?

A. Well, that's the reason. He liked power. There's no

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doubt about the fact that.... Even, I'll tell you, some people came along sometimes, and it was a matter of what we call in Persian hajj-e haya <respect for friends>, and so on. They used to come along, and ask favors, this, that and the other. And I didn't want Gavam's name ... while I was there (I was his vice prime minister -- my room was just behind his room, you see) to be, sort of a bad <unclear> people coming and going. And I put the name of preserving Gavam <Persian>, but I put a special person there to ... that certain people, who were ... I knew, who wanted to come around and profit from Gavam's hajj-e haya, as we used to call it, and get certain favors which would have been bad for Gavam's personal reputation. I wouldn't let them go, when they came there. I didn't let them go in. I would say, "There is no time now." And Gavam understood that. He said, "You're only allowing certain people to come here." I said, "If I've done something that I've told you, it's quite true, but it's in your interests." When he thought, he said, "Perhaps you are right." I said, "I was afraid that you might sometime accept something ... to do something for somebody which afterwards you yourself would probably regret."

Q. What I still can't understand, what were the pressures that were on this old statesmen that made him give up ... you know, let his friends go.

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A. Well, he liked me very much....

Q. Why didn't he say, "No. I'm going to keep my cabinet. I'm going to keep these people."? What could have happened? I mean, he had his political party.

A. Yes, well, we had the political party. We had....

Q. He had much power.

A. He had the power, but then it would have become a sort of a duel between the Shah and Gavam. If I had been there, I would have promised Gavam within 24 hours. I would have finished the whole damn thing, you see. It's a question of being a man of action -- one is or one isn't, you understand. At a crisis in the country, if one wants to think about doing this, that, and the other -- well everything disappears. There are certain moments in history where one is obliged to take decisions which are of vital importance, and it's there ... no concession is possible. Gavam was always a man of concession. Where, in my opinion, certain things, concessions should not have been made.

Well, he's <the Shah> lasted up to three years ago, the same person. Do you understand what I mean? He was a cancer in the body politic of Iran, the Shah, you see, until the moment

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he died.

And now they're talking all this rubbish about his son. Which you know, of course. They talk. And nobody seems ... these people don't seem to understand. And the people who hear... They've opened shops. These people are so ... certain sort of opposition here. They talk and talk and talk. They're now talking for two years: "In twenty days we're in Tehran." You see, they've opened a shop. They're getting money from here, there, and everywhere. They've opened shops. And now there's no possibility of them going. They're not prepared to take risks. They've got too much money now to take risks. Do you understand what I mean? It is something incredible.

I know that because they won't ... the people won't ... are not leaving me alone. They are coming night and day from Iran, here. They're every one: "Where are you? Why don't you come? There's only one person who could come along and arrange a country and not let this thing...." Well, there must be possibilities. There must be certain things. I don't discourage them. They're all there. But people who have been collaborating with all these people, the certain so-called oppositions here, you know, they're disgusted. I'd never met them in my life. Civil, military, all kinds of ... every type of people, you understand.

Well, the question is, there must be certain ... the

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practically possible ... there must be a certainty on the international question. I was waiting to see what Reagan was going to do, you see. But I'm only hearing this talking about muscles. You have muscles. Well everyone knows, but that other side has more muscles than you -- in the region, especially. What muscles? It's not a question of muscles. It's a question of the policy. It must be based on discretion, on meditation ... of the situation. That's really the whole trouble.

Q. Can we go back to when you left Tehran for Moscow? And you were in Moscow and things were happening in Tehran....

A. Well, as I said, when things started to happen ... well, I stopped it all. Because there were ... they came there ... some of them were running away from Azerbaijan, some of the people who had been there ... stayed there, running away -- with arms and so on. I went and saw Molotov. I telephoned up and made a <protest>. I said, "What's this going on in Azerbaijan again?" I said, "Are you going back, making some ... certain agreements or something with the British about the division of Iran if some ... anyone starts trouble?"

Q. The Russians were going in?

A. No, no, no. They wanted to provoke the Russians to come in.

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Q. I see.

A. The plan was to make trouble. Provoke the Russians to come.

Q. I see.

A. That was the plan. Do you understand what I mean? If they <the Russians> had come, the others <the British> wouldn't have even waited one minute. They were there, you see. They would have come to Basra and they wouldn't have waited one minute, you see. If the Russians had come, they would have come. The affair would have been finished, you see. I said, "Well, Molotov," I said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Some of them are running away with the arms. The arms belong to the government." He gave immediate orders to stop all these people at the frontier and take every bit of arms they'd got. I sent a telegram to Gavam. I said, "All these arms will be given back to your representatives."

Q. I see, the Pishevari people were taking arms <unclear>?

A. They were taking arms and running away ... wanting to go to Russia, you see, ... at the frontier.

Q. I see, they were going over ... across the border....

A. They wanted to cross over the border, then to see if they could do something there, you know, and get.... They could say.... There were many other agents of people amongst these people, you see. There were arms on Iranian territory. They would have stayed <there> in <unclear> until the Russians had come in.

Q. I see, that these were Russian arms coming in.

A. It was a plan to get the Russians into the thing. I went and spoke to Molotov -- without any instructions ... from the government.

Q. But didn't you wonder what was happening to your old friend, Qavam? Why was he allowing these things to happen?

A. No, I knew, I knew. That's why I resigned. That's finally why I resigned. And Qavam ... anyway ... he knew, himself. After I'd gone, he told me, when he was here -- afterwards he came to France. He was here. We talked. He said, "The day you left me, I was lost," he told me. Because the sincerity must exist, you see. Qavam wanted ... meant well, you see, but he wasn't always prepared to use all those means necessary for arriving at the....

Q. The objective.

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A. The objective. Well, you can't hesitate if you have an important objective to achieve.

Q. Is it true that sometimes he would estekhareh <consult a book or worry-beads in order to decide about something>?

A. He believed in it sometimes. Yes.

Q. I was told by one person that there was an important question, and he said he was going to estekhareh.

A. Yes, yes. Make estekhareh. Well, when he didn't want to do something, or when it depended on his own... He always said, "If I didn't want to do it" he could say he believed it: "I did estekhareh and it turned out bad! <Persian>" He wouldn't accept the responsibility himself. He said the estekhareh did it.

Q. And then the next year his cabinet resigned, and left him alone, and the Majlis gave him a vote of no confidence, and they wouldn't even give him a diplomatic passport to leave Iran?

A. Yes, they left and he had to come. And....

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Q. An ordinary passport? How did this happen?

A. Yes, yes. He came. Well, as I said to you, he ... that was all the Shah's enmity, of course, and....

Q. I mean, how could within one year <there> be such a great change?

A. Well, it depends on....

Q. The "Jenab-e Ashraf" <His Excellency> to become someone without a passport?

A. "Jenab-e Ashraf," you know finally the Shah gave the ... because when he was ... <unclear> Jenab-e Aghayeh Qavam <His Excellency, Mr. Qavam>. That was before.... But on the radio, talking all over Iran, I had given instructions to say "Jenab-e Ashraf." The Shah was hearing the news: "Jenab-e Ashraf ... Jenab-e Ashraf." <He said:> "They've been eliminated, all the titles." Well, all right. He saw it was bad. He had obliged. He wrote the order himself, and signed: "the title 'Jenab-e Ashraf' is being granted to you."

Q. So it was after the fact.

A. Yes. After I had given instructions all over the country, you see -- "Jenab-e Ashraf", they said -- which

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forced him to do that. Yes.

Q. But again, you know, what I'm trying to say is that the dramatic difference within 12 months, from where Qavam was and where he ended up is really difficult to understand.

A. Well, it's not really difficult to understand ... for somebody who was there, but for me it's not difficult to understand because I know what importance there is in the surroundings one has there, you see. When one is....

And the fact that, of course, after I left, the Shah's authority became more. I wouldn't allow it -- I told him, you see. And they had several shots at me, you know, while I was in Iran. They tried to 'bump me off'. Do you understand what I mean? When I was in Abadan. There was a strike there. And I was walking in the gardens of the governorship there. Suddenly, I was talking with somebody, and a bullet passed and Hejazi, Colonel Hejazi, who I had arrested, and....

Q. And also the other man....

A. Mesbah-Fatemi was there, as well, the governor-general was there, you see -- of Khouzestan -- they were there, standing at the corner there. And when I.... "What the hell is happening?" I said, "What the hell is happening?" There

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was a jeep there. I said, "Hejazi, come, quickly!" I got into the jeep and said, "Come in. Let's go out and see what's happening -- who's firing and from where." They were afraid of the things. I said, "Sit down, sit down, sit down." I said, "Now, who's fighting? What's all this firing coming from?" He said, "We don't know what's happening." I said, "You don't know? You're governor-general. You're the military governor here."

Q. Also there was a fateh -- a policeman or something?

A. The fateh was the oil-fellow. Mustafe Fateh.

Q. But there was another army ... the Commander of Khorramshar or something.

A. Oh, perhaps there was another officer. I don't know. But the farmande, of Khouzestan, the commander of Khouzestan, who had sent arms -- British arms -- from Basra, by Iranian army trucks to the Bekhtieri, to be distributed, you see. And we had documents that he had done that, and he'd sent these.

Q. Who were the people who wanted the Shah to gain greater power vis-a-vis the Prime Minister? And why?

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A. All those people who were around the Shah. They were degenerate, interested, peculiarly interested, people. They were not for the person of the Shah. They didn't care a damn about him. They just wanted to exploit any and every situation to fill their pockets.

Q. But they had joined the Democratic Party and they were members of a party along with their leaders.

A. No, but we had all kinds of people in the party. We had to. Certain people came in the party who were not very well-reputed either -- newspaper people and so on. In their newspapers they could write.... Somebody came and said, "I heard you're making a party. What is this people who you allow in them?" I said, "Who?" He gave me names. I said, "Well, look here, we're going to build a wonderful palace -- marble palace." He said, "Yes." I said, "In this marble palace are you going to build a water closet or not? Or perhaps several water closets?" He said, "Sure." I said, "Well, they are water closets. You can't build a marble palace without having...."

Q. But it sounds like the marble palace was full of water closets. And that's why....

A. No. After I left, I don't know, because it was at the beginning I left. It was the beginning of the party and so

on. But as long as I was there, I wouldn't allow....

Q. Because when ... at the time when Qavam received a vote of no confidence, they even took over the party. His opponents even took over his own party.

A. Well, I said, they allowed infiltration. They got in. But while I was there, no. While I was there, the Democratic Party.... It was at the beginning, of course, it was the beginning of it's thing. I'd kept it very clean, and there was one or two newspaper people who wanted to come in -- I knew them very well. They changed their ideas with the question of money, but they were necessary for certain people if we wanted to attack or wanted to use language which wasn't used by most people, you see. They were necessary. They were the water closets, as you imagine, and I told them that. And they all laughed when I told them that.

Q. I've come across a letter written by George Allen to Mr. Jernegan, and he explains the circumstances of this change of cabinet. He says that ever since he came to Iran, the Shah wanted to have Qavam removed. But he would not yield. He would say, "You should reign and not rule, and leave Qavam alone, because he's the strongest man to keep the Russians out." But he says by ... in September, when your government, Qavam's government, and the Ghashghaies came to an agreement, where the Ghashghaies agreed to support the Democratic Party,

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the Shah was upset because he wanted the Gheahghaies crushed and their arms taken, and this wasn't done. So he increased his pressure on the Americans.

At the same time, George Allen says that he received a report from someone that he ... had, that the question of the joint air company with the Russians was discussed in the cabinet by General Firouz, who was minister of roads. And that everyone in the cabinet meeting, except for Hezhir, had agreed with this air agreement. Iraj Eskandari had asked for the question to be postponed so that Iran could renounce its signature in the Chicago Agreement, where apparently this agreement was not consistent with that. Then it was claimed -- and I'll stress claimed, or alleged -- that you had spoken about this meeting with someone in the Russian Embassy.

A. Me?

Q. This is the report that....

A. Yes, I know....

Q. The first secretary of the Russian Embassy had gone to Eskandari's house and had said, "Why did you oppose this air company?" And Eskandari said, "I hadn't opposed it, I'd just asked for postponement." Then Eskandari had gone to Qavam, saying, "Firouz has ... reported to the Russians about me."

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Then this story had reached George Allen. And he says in his letter (which I think you would be interested in seeing and I'll send it to you), he says, "This was a golden opportunity I was waiting for, because this ... now I could get rid of Firouz and these others from the cabinet, and at the same time end these discussions with the Russians for this air traffic."

So he had gone -- on October 14th, I believe -- he had gone to Qavam and had said, "We no longer have confidence in your government, because you are infiltrated in your cabinet and you cannot have cabinet discussions without it being reported to the Russians." And Qavam had asked him, "Now who are you talking about?" George Allen had refused to mention your name. George Allen had waited two days, or three days, and Qavam had done nothing. Then George Allen goes to the Shah and says, "I now agree with you that Qavam should either be arrested, ex'ed, or imprisoned, if he does not agree to disband his cabinet." And the Shah had asked Allen, "When should I do this?" And he had said, "Right away."

Now, just a few days before that, Abbas Mes'oudi had gone to George Allen, in the evening, and had said, "We want to make a coup d'état against Qavam, and will you help us?" And then of course the Shah had asked Qavam to come in. There were rumors that General Amirahmedi had contacted Qavam and said that he may have to act on behalf of the Shah if he didn't

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resign. And then Qavam had agreed to propose a new cabinet. Now, this is something which has not come out in any reports in the past, and I'm very interested in.... You're the first person who was actually there who I can ask this question.

A. The only question, this question about the limit and Iraj.... This is the first time I'm hearing this -- from you -- this question about the ... the question of Iraj <Eskandari>. The only thing I can tell you is that Iraj Eskandari was amongst those people who were afterwards suspected of having been working for British interests in Iran -- amongst the Tudeh. Do you understand what I mean? So if it was a prefabricated arrangement that there should be this question, that Iraj Eskandari should ask for time, and so on and so on.... They would go and come along ... and then Eskandari would go and say, "This person ... this report has been given by ..., to the ... the question was of no interest for us. It was a question of very minor interest, this question of the thing...."

G. Air traffic.

A. The air traffic question. "Very, very insignificant." The reports ... if he wanted to give the reports to the Soviet Embassy ... they should give reports to the Soviet Embassy, that it was through me -- that I got the Russians out. They knew better than anybody, do you understand what I

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mean? I mean, these things were so insignificant that they only become....

Q. But of interest, what's of interest....

A. But it's the first time I hear about it -- from you.

Q. But what's of interest is the very active role that George Allen....

A. Against me....

Q. Took to change....

A. I'll show you, now I'll show you, let me show you....